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AUTHOR McKinnon, Norma Cole
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ABSTRACT

This paper briefly reviews the higher education literature on nonacademic staff evaluation, followed by a description of the development of process of staff performance appraisal being implemented at Atlantic Baptist College (New Brunswick, Canada). Steps in the development process are outlined starting with the writing of a report on compensation evaluation, followed by a gathering of administrators and nonacademic staff to consider the concept of evaluation, the writing of a draft document based on reviews of various evaluation paradigms, and finally, the creation of performance indicators. Refinements to the evaluation process are also briefly highlighted involving the development of a staff self-evaluation form to permit staff to verbalize their opinions about their performance strengths and weaknesses, the staff proficiency evaluation form used in supervisor/staff member dialogues about the evaluation, and the use of the critical incident journal. The complete evaluation program is included in the appendix, including the forms used, performance indicator guidelines, and the college staff evaluation policy and procedures. (GLR)

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DEVELOPMENT OF A PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROGRAM FOR NONACADEMIC STAFF AT ATLANTIC BAPTIST COLLEGE

by

Norma Cole McKinnon, Ed.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Atlantic Baptist College

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DEVELOPMENT OF A PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROGRAM FOR NONACADEMIC STAFF AT ATLANTIC BAPTIST COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

Includes a brief review of the higher education literature on staff evaluation. Discusses the process used at Atlantic Baptist College for developing a preliminary approach to staff performance appraisal. The complete evaluation program is enclosed in Appendix A, including the **Staff Self-Evaluation** instrument, the **Staff Proficiency Evaluation** instrument, the **Performance Indicators Guidelines** and the college **Staff Evaluation Policy and Procedure.**

Introduction

It became clear after a recent staff meeting that nonacademic staff were distressed about the fact that their performance was not being explicitly evaluated. Although the administration had already begun work on a systematic, evaluation program, much like the one that was developed for faculty, staff voiced concern about the length of time that would be involved in developing the ideal, customized program. In essence, they implored administrators to develop or adopt a preliminary program.

Because staff were anxious to have objective reactions to their performance as soon as possible, a determination was made to generate a preliminary performance appraisal to be used in the next few weeks. Naturally, time would be taken to involve staff in the development procedure so that they would have "ownership" of the outcome.

Atlantic Baptist College is a small, private, Christian liberal arts university that does not have a collective bargaining agreement. Although most staff have been evaluated periodically over the years, performance evaluation had not been managed to the satisfaction of some staff. Evaluation was subjective in nature and unceremonious as there were no guidelines for safeguarding consistency and equity. This meant that staff were not confident about what was expected of them relative to performance beyond the fundamental tasks listed in their job descriptions. There was no objective basis for advancement or salary augmentation, and given the "holistic" nature of the institution, it was deemed germane that evaluation be "holistic" as well. It should address the personal as well as the professional and the spiritual as well as the academic/technical.

The objective of this practicum is to provide a synopsis of the process exercised to generate the evaluation program and submit the product in Appendix A for use by others who have the challenging obligation to develop an evaluation program for nonacademic staff in higher education establishments. It should be noted that supervisors have just begun to conduct the evaluations so the wrinkles have not yet been ironed out.

The Process

The initial obstacle facing the administrative committee was that of developing a clear understanding of the underlying concerns and potential issues pertaining to evaluation, while furnishing staff with an opportunity for input into the dialogue. The first phase in program development was to have our resident expert prepare a report on compensation evaluation. He contributed a well-written, academic, or abstract report that was both informative and ideal. It contained data about the importance of internal consistency, external consistency, and ability to compensate. It introduced the various approaches to evaluation, delineating the implications of each. The theme that rang through most clearly was the essential need to include staff in program formation.

The second step in the process involved a gathering of administrators and nonacademic staff to consider evaluation. Staff were told what had taken place to date and were guaranteed that they would be intrinsically involved in program development. The president took the lead in this meeting and afforded staff with ample time to express their concerns. The predominant concern at that time involved the amount of time they had been awaiting a performance appraisal. They were understandably restless. Subsequently, they desired an evaluation of their performance as soon as feasible.

The administration decided that action should be undertaken to supply staff with the satisfaction they merited. Despite the fact that preliminary research had been conducted about compensation approaches, another computer search of the higher education literature was conducted in an attempt to locate practical ideas and methods used to evaluate nonacademic staff.

Licata (1985, p. 13) maintains that, "designing and operationalizing an evaluation process that nourishes staff growth, recognizes staff accomplishments and fosters staff improvements is no easy task." Kudless (1985, p. 3) states that "evaluation must have the twin characteristics of flexibility and individualization."

Padron (in Romanik, 1986, p. 3) lists the ensuing assumptions upon which to evaluate a staff performance appraisal: First, the emphasis upon accountability within education will continue into the future making the evaluation of faculty, staff, and administrators inevitable. Second, a perfect evaluation plan has not been developed to date since all evaluation data have limitations. The challenge, therefore, is to develop a viable staff evaluation plan where future refinement will be possible. Finally, an exemplary evaluation plan emphasizes participation in the development process from those being evaluated and should also emphasize staff development, as well as accountability.

Padron's assumptions were entirely congruous with the convictions of college administrators. They postulated that an evaluation process should foster both staff growth and accountability, and involves staff in refining the process. It is apparent from the higher education literature that institutional effectiveness and personal growth will be heightened by an evaluation process that facilitates continual review and betterment of performance. Groff (1991, p. 13) has written extensively about staff development and evaluation over the past ten years and he makes the position crystal clear when he asserts that:

> If our organizations are to remain viable in the years models must be developed to assist institutions and individuals to diagnose areas for development and then specify strategies to progress along a charted course of action. Institutions and individuals alike need a comprehensive diagnostic/developmental system to keep growing. It would appear incontrovertible that maximum synergism is achieved when individual diagnostic/developmental systems are in harmony and synchronization with the organizational diagnostic/ developmental system.

He adds, "In the case of individuals, it should help persons to understand their stage of development and the formulation and revision of professional and personal goals in relation to an image of the future" (1991, p. 13). Groff's caution to couple staff evaluation with the institution's

strategic vision and to secure a developmental orientation was an intuitive inclination for program developers since the major developer studied under Groff's tutelage for over two years.

The next phase of development involved the writing of a draft document. The first draft was taken to the administrative committee for discussion and to designated staff for feedback. The second draft, which incorporated the bulk of the input, was circulated to these same individuals for subsequent feedback. The process up until that point had taken roughly eighty hours of systematic work. Several evaluation paradigms had been examined for commonalities and the five following basic categories repeatedly surfaced: Professional qualifications and technical skills, social and interpersonal skills, communications and language skills, personal skills, and administrative skills. A sixth category, Christian skills, was injected due to the "holistic" nature of the developmental evaluations to be conducted at the college.

After agreeing on the categories to be used, essential performance indicators were delineated for each category, for example, the category professional qualifications and technical skills included the indicators, "computing ability" and "quality control." Following the tedious task of determining which indicators should be encompassed, an even more tedious task was completed - that of clarifying exactly what was meant by each of the performance indicators. For example, the indicator "quality control" was assigned the following performance measures: On-time for work, minimal use of sick-time, schedules personal business outside of work hours, on-task, takes appropriate amount of time allocated for breaks and lunch, minimal-error work record, and efficient use of college resources.

The above example demonstrates the degree to which program developers strived to objectify the evaluation instrument. Admittedly, a great deal of subjectivity lingered, for example, what constitutes minimal-error work? It

is envisioned that considerable program subjectivity will be weeded out during the first implementation year. As Groff (1991) maintains, refinement will take place in due time with the assistance of the staff members themselves.

Because it was believed that staff should be involved in their own evaluation, not just in the development of the program, a **Staff Self-Evaluation** form was developed to permit staff to verbalize their opinions about their performance strengths and weaknesses. It should be recognized that the strengths and weaknesses relate directly to a staff member's present position. After finishing the self-evaluation, the staff member reroutes it to his/her immediate supervisor. The supervisor then completes the **Staff Proficiency Evaluation** form and arranges a meeting with the staff member for a dialogue about the evaluation. This form contains the same six categories as the self-evaluation form, designates level of proficiency, and asks for examples of each performance indicator. The staff member is given ample occasion to refute the appraisal in writing and a grievance procedure is obtainable should discrepancies arise. Additionally, definitions of the five proficiency levels were furnished so that evaluators would have a clear and consistent understanding about each level.

The appraisal can only be considered in the context of specific jobs, for example, a secretary may use "documentation" more than a janitor and a janitor may use "operating policy and procedures" more than a secretary. Nonetheless, it is surmised that this evaluation program, though far from ideal, constitutes the beginnings of a valuable program.

It should be recognized that the performance indicators are tied directly to the merit raise scale. Our college has elected to use a categorization taxonomy, whereby job titles are assigned to appropriate categories with entry-level salaries and merit increases specified for each category. For example, a secretary with minimal qualifications may enter the workplace in job category number two, at an entry level of $18, 000. When his/her performance is appraised in one year, s/he may be granted a merit increase, in which case s/he will move to level two within the job

classification scheme, bringing the salary to $18, 500 (figures are hypothetical).

Supervisors and staff have been asked to develop a **critical incident journal** that spans the entire year. Behavior worthy of reward, and behavior worthy of improvement, should be written down for future reference. Supervisors should refer to their journals when completing **Staff Proficiency Evaluations** and staff should refer to their journals when completing **Staff Self-Evaluations**. If discrepancies of opinion arise relative to the evaluations, the journals should prove extremely beneficial in assessing actuality.

Out of the potential 150 points a staff member could conceivably procure on a performance appraisal, a specific number of points is required to obtain a merit salary increase. Unfortunately, evaluation dialogue has not advanced to that point; however, staff will be invited to enter into the discussion with administrators relative to judging an equitable number. Perhaps 120 points out of a possible 150 points should be secured prior to appropriating a merit increase. It will be fascinating to observe how much controversy envelops the matter of "the points" and even more interesting to see if the new program works. In one of our preparatory discussions about evaluation, a young, astute, staff member said, "I would much rather have an imperfect evaluation system than to have no system at all." Well, we do have a plan, including a bureaucratic policy and procedure, thereby exponentially augmenting the likelihood for success. One spinoff to the whole process was the congenial opportunity to interact with staff on a concern of this magnitude. The magnitude of the evaluation issue cannot be belittled given the indisputable bearing it has on personal and institutional effectiveness. College leaders must approach the evaluation of nonacademic staff with as much fervor as they do faculty evaluation.

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Appendix A

ATLANTIC BAPTIST COLLEGE

STAFF EVALUATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy

Each staff member will receive an annual evaluation of his/her performance. Evaluations will be conducted at the end of the academic year and prior to the new fiscal year. The evaluation will be a joint effort between the staff member and his/her immediate supervisor. The primary goals of performance evaluation at ABC are: personal development and merit salary determination.

Procedure

1. The supervisor distributes the **Staff Self-Evaluation** form to the staff member at the close of the academic year.

2. The staff member completes the **Staff Self-Evaluation** form and returns it to his/her immediate supervisor.

3. The supervisor reviews the completed **Staff Self-Evaluation** form and arranges a meeting with the staff member prior to the new fiscal year.

4. Prior to the meeting, the supervisor completes the **Staff Proficiency Evaluation** form.

5. The supervisor and staff member meet to discuss the evaluation. The staff member is given an opportunity to refute the supervisor's evaluation of his/her performance, in writing, on the **Staff Proficiency Evaluation** form.

6. The supervisor obtains the signature of the department's senior administrator. If the employee's comments indicate disagreement with the supervisor's evaluation of his/her performance, the administrator evaluates the discrepancy prior to co-signing the evaluation.

7. Copies of the completed **Staff Proficiency Evaluation** form are forwarded to the staff member and the senior administrator as warranted.

8. Evaluation grievances should be directed to the department's senior administrator.

Note: Both supervisor and employee should keep a "critical incident" journal, indicating behaviors that are worthy of reward and those that need improvement. This critical incident journal should be referred to by the supervisor when completing the staff proficiency evaluation and by the employee when completing the self-evaluation. Further, should the supervisor's and employee's perception of performance differ substantially, the journals should be reviewed.

STAFF SELF-EVALUATION

Name of Staff Member: _____

Job Title: _____

Date: _____

Under each category below, briefly note two or three specific areas which you believe are your strengths, and two or three specific areas which you believe are your weaknesses, in skill areas related to your current job. * (Your self-analysis is, of course, confidential; don't be too modest or self-critical!)

		STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
A.	PROFESSIONAL/ TECHNICAL SKILLS	1 2 3	1 2 3
B.	SOCIAL/ INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	1 2 3	1 2 3
C.	COMMUNICATIONS/ LANGUAGE SKILLS	1 2 3	1 2 3
D.	ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS	1 2 3	1 2 3
E.	PERSONAL SKILLS	1 2 3	1 2 3
F.	CHRISTIAN SKILLS	1 2 3	1 2 3

* Refer to Performance Guidelines for an explanation of the performance indicators corresponding to the six skill areas.

DRAFT

ATLANTIC BAPTIST COLLEGE

PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

Job-related **strengths** are those specific areas of competence, qualification, or skill which one could contribute confidently, without significant additional training, to her/his job. Job-related **weaknesses** are those job-related areas which would require significant additional training or practice.

The following list provides performance indicators in each of the six categories outlined on the **Staff Self-Evaluation and the Staff Proficiency Evaluation.**

A. Professional qualifications and technical skills:

1. Credentials - degree, license, and/or certification required or recommended for the job (see job description).

2. Experience - number of years of experience required or recommended for the job (see job description).

3. Computing ability - ability to utilize the computer to the extent required or recommended for the job (see job description).

4. Quality control - on-time for work, minimal use of sick-time, schedules personal business outside of work hours, on-task, takes the appropriate amount of time allocated for breaks and lunch, minimal-error work record, efficient use of College resources.

B. Social and interpersonal skills:

1. Cooperate and negotiate - willing to work with others, keeps the best interest of others in mind, contributes to and abides by group decisions, asks others for advice and opinions, uses tact or diplomacy to obtain information or to make requests, accepts and uses constructive criticism without taking it "personally," seeks out and does a fair share of the group tasks, listens and respects the ideas and opinions of others, exhibits honestly and courtesy.

2. Conflict resolution - takes the first step to resolve conflict, positively challenges other group members, leads so that members are "safe" to express opinions, sensitively expresses opposing ideas, recognizes and openly confronts problems lovingly, displays courage in taking appropriate risks.

C. Communications and language skills:

1. Oral speech - Speaks clearly, concisely, & pleasantly.

2. Listening - Uses "active" listening skills and interprets data properly.

3. Documentation - Documents accurately, makes notes on key points, checks ambiguous communication with speaker, files copies of important documents, appropriately acknowledges resources used.

4. Nonverbal behaviour - Uses effective body language, nonverbal behaviour is professional and consistent with oral communications.

D. <u>Administrative skills:</u>

1. Problem-solving - Recognizes that a problem exists without being told, asks good probing questions, consults resources and gathers information about the problem, considers more than one idea or solution (doesn't base solution solely on past experience), continues to find improved ways to solve problems should they recur.

2. Decision-making - Recognizes that a decision has to be made, able to follow through and make decisions expediently, examines options and their implications, seeks advice and/or clarifying information if necessary, is willing and able to compromise at appropriate times in group decision-making, uses consensus whenever possible in group decision-making, is able to provide rationale for decisions, is aware of the consequences of a decision, accepts responsibility for the decision, draws logical conclusions from available information, sticks to an unpopular position when it is appropriate or defensible, and supports group decisions when it is appropriate regardless of personal opinion.

3. Critical thinking - Gathers and analyzes information for appropriate use, synthesizes information, evaluates information, understands cause and effect, distinguishes between fact, opinion and inference, identifies and appropriately uses assumptions, knows the difference between influence and manipulation, and does not use the latter.

4. Management - Demonstrates an understanding of the tasks and projects, identifies and prioritizes tasks to be done, delegates tasks effectively and equitably (if relevant), recognizes and acknowledges worth in others, works to maintain trust within the College, and provides leadership when appropriate.

5. Operating policy & procedures - Understands College policy & procedures, assists with the development of policy and procedures, supports policy & procedures, abides by policy & procedures.

6. Planning - Plans time and work, sets "realistic" work objectives without being asked to do so, can articulate daily plans when asked, understands and can explain department plans - both short-term and long-term, works to accomplish personal, departmental, and College objectives.

7. Supervision (if relevant) - Demonstrates appropriate supervisory skills such as planning, evaluating, leading, motivating, whether it is supervision of other ABC employees, students, or volunteers.

8. Organization - Organizes information, time, space, materials and tasks, rations resources efficiently, sets and meets deadlines, manages details without being overwhelmed, remains flexible in anticipation of change/the unexpected, reviews and revises plans.

E. <u>Personal skills and reputation:</u>

1. Independent learning - Makes a realistic assessment of own learning needs, translates learning needs into achievable objectives, relates to peers collaboratively i.e. as resources for learning, concentrates and perseveres on given tasks.

2. Creativity - Recognizes conformist thinking, considers unconventional alternatives and takes appropriate risks in pursuing them, seeks alternative approaches outside of the obvious, shows originality in thought, and synthesizes old ideas into fresh approaches.

3. Flexibility - Is able to vary ideas and approaches, does not hang on to tradition or "sacred cows" without trying out alternative ideas and approaches, is willing to give a little extra time and energy when needed.

4. Maturity - Is not self-centered, can let the other person "shine" sometimes, can let disagreements drop sometimes, cares about others' needs and concerns, has a service attitude.

5. Self-directedness/initiative - Ability to set priorities and accomplish the duties of the job without direct supervision (unless it is a novel experience), introduces ideas, approaches, and solutions to supervisor and others without being asked, sees areas for improvement and moves on it if appropriate, actively pursues life and work opportunities without being prompted, takes the initiative in assigning relevant or appropriate tasks to oneself.

6. High-motivation - Continually improving personally, professionally, and institutionally, does not need to be told to develop plans and set objectives for improvement, goes ahead and gets the job done regardless of what the "clock" says, is enthusiastic about the College mission/goals.

7. Efficiency - Does work quickly and with minimal error, does not need supervisor to repeatedly proof documents or check on work completed, uses available resources to perfect work being accomplished, does not waste time, energy, abilities, or money.

8. Self-awareness - Knows own strengths and weaknesses and can communicate them, works to improve weaknesses and makes good use of strengths.

F. Christian Skills:

1. Faith - Integration of faith with all aspects of job; examples are: commitment to service, Christian attitude, involvement in spiritual activities, exhibits a Christian demeanour (attitude and dress).

STAFF PROFICIENCY EVALUATION

EMPLOYEE: _____

JOB TITLE: _____

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

Level of Proficiency*

	Unaccept.	Low	Average	High	Excels	Examples
A. Professional/Technical						
* credentials	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* experience	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* computing	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* quality control	1	2	3	4	5	_____
				Subtotal	_____	
B. Social/Interpersonal						
* cooperation & negotiation	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5	_____
				Subtotal	_____	
C. Communications/Language						
* oral speech	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* listening	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* documentation	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* nonverbal behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	_____
				Subtotal	_____	
D. Administrative						
* problem-solving	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* decision-making	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* critical thinking	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* management	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* operating policy & procedures	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* planning	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* supervision (if relevant)	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* organization	1	2	3	4	5	_____
				Subtotal	_____	

Level of Proficiency (contd.)

	Unaccept.	Low	Average	Excels		Examples
E. Personal/Reputation						
* independent learning	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* creativity	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* flexibility	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* maturity	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* self-directedness/ initiative	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* high motivation	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* efficiency	1	2	3	4	5	_____
* self-awareness	1	2	3	4	5	_____
				Subtotal		_____
F. Christian						
* faith	1	2	3	4	5	_____
				Subtotal		_____
				Total		_____

*Unacceptable = Requires guidance, advice, or correction constantly in work performance or application

Low = Requires guidance, advice, or correction fairly frequently in work performance or application.

Average = Requires little guidance or correction in work performance or application.

High = Essentially self-contained, may be proficient, depending on activity area.

Excels = Is considered an "expert" in the area and may give advice to others, consultation, or even demonstrations/inservices.

These ratings can only be examined in light of a particular job, since the frequency of needed use varies with jobs. For example, a secretary may use written communications skills frequently, while a maintenance supervisor may have only occasional need for these skills.

AREAS TO STRENGTHEN:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

MERIT INCREASE:

Place a check mark in the appropriate box below:

___ Staff member scored ____ points or greater out of a possible 150 points,
___ therefore, a merit increase is recommended.

___ Staff member scored ____ points or lower out of a possible 150 points,
___ therefore, a merit increase is not recommended.

NARRATIVE SECTION:

Please comment on your thoughts and feelings about the evaluation.